

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 12, 2023

Brendan Owens  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Energy, Installations, and Environment  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Christine E. Wormuth  
Secretary of the Army  
101 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Assistant Secretary Owens and Secretary Wormuth:

We write concerned about the findings from the U.S. Army Audit<sup>1</sup> issued on August 2, 2023, regarding Lead-Based Paint (LBP) and Asbestos-Containing Material (ACM) in privatized military housing. As you know, the Army installations included in the audit were Fort Cavazos, Fort Liberty, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord. This audit reviewed if these installations followed the U.S. Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM) Housing Maintenance Quality Assurance and Environmental Hazard Oversight Program.

The audit found that “...all 201 homes had LBP, which required a risk assessment...none of the homes had those additional risk assessments.” Further, Army housing offices didn’t provide documentation to support those 82 homes also had ACM. The results of this audit are deeply concerning and we’re committed to working with the Army to ensure privatized housing for military families is safe and habitable. As members of the Armed Services Committee, we’re dedicated to improving housing for our soldiers and their families. Considering the Army missed their recruitment goal last year by “about 15,000 soldiers — or 25 percent,”<sup>2</sup> we’re concerned these poor privatized housing conditions will exacerbate recruitment and retention issues the Army is facing.

We cannot allow service members and their families to live in unsafe conditions. Military families aren’t asking for a palace, but somewhere comfortable they can relax and spend time with each other. We want to ensure Army housing officials are being held accountable and taking action when LBP and ACM are identified. While identifying the problem is a good first step, the Army and Department of Defense need to ensure the problem is being solved.

The audit mentions<sup>3</sup> “152 (98 percent) checklists for LBP visual assessment forms were incomplete or completed inaccurately and 121 (78 percent) LBP visual assessment forms weren’t completed”<sup>4</sup>. The audit admits, “this occurred primarily because Army housing supervisors didn’t provide effective oversight to verify that all required assessments were done to ensure garrison housing office inspectors

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Army Audit Agency: Lead-Based Paint and Asbestos-Containing Material in Privatized Housing  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wmsj4WvWVlICAoh5Y8\\_C06l4uINm\\_zAN/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wmsj4WvWVlICAoh5Y8_C06l4uINm_zAN/view)

<sup>2</sup> Army misses recruiting goal by 15,000 soldiers  
<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2022/10/02/army-misses-recruiting-goal-by-15000-soldiers/>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Army Audit Agency: Lead-Based Paint and Asbestos-Containing Material in Privatized Housing, pg. 4

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Army Audit Agency: Lead-Based Paint and Asbestos-Containing Material in Privatized Housing, pg. 5

properly completed the checklists and assessment forms<sup>5</sup>.” This is unacceptable and we must ensure Army housing supervisors are doing their jobs. We will continue to conduct rigorous oversight of the services. We owe it to our service members and their families that they have adequate privatized military housing.

For these reasons we request your response to the following questions:

- 1) Considering the amount of LBP and ACM found at Fort Cavazos, Fort Liberty, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, how widespread is this issue? How many Army privatized housing units across the country have LBP and ACM?
- 2) If an Army housing office supervisor fails to conduct oversight through the checklist and LBP visual assessment forms, what actions are taken to hold them accountable?
- 3) If privatized partners are responsible for the risk assessment, what is the Army doing to ensure risk assessments are being carried out? What is DoD and the Army doing to ensure there are no gaps in communication between the Army and privatized partners on risk assessments?

We request a response to these questions by October 17, 2023. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Alford  
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



Don Davis  
Member of Congress



James Moylan  
Member of Congress



Rich McCormick, M.D., MBA  
Member of Congress

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Army Audit Agency: Lead-Based Paint and Asbestos-Containing Material in Privatized Housing, pg. 5

CC:

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